

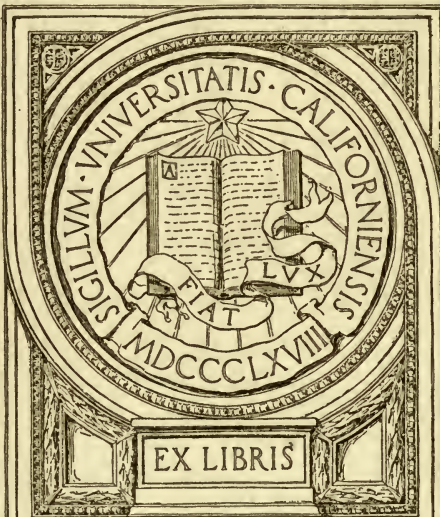
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The

HOUSE
OF A
THOUSAND
COBWEBS

Being a BOOK OF FABLES
written in the Vernacular
of Today



The author—in a typical frame of mine

The HOUSE *of a*
THOUSAND COBWEBS
and nine other
FABLES

By H. A. STEBBINS

AUTHOR OF

"REVERIES OF A RAMBLER," ETC.

Illustrated by RAY WINTERS



SAN FRANCISCO
THE ABBOTT PRESS
1920

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ANNEX 180

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of their appearance:*

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Fore Warning

A FEW years back, in the course of my magazine work, I had occasion to interview a famous evangelist who is accused of having crowded more sinners into the State of Penance than any other living soul. This evangelist, by the way, is famous not only for the tremendous host of converts who follow in his wake, but for his forceful and fiery style of preaching.

And I said to this Preachin' Bill: "Why do you say that 'David hit Goliath right on the coco between the two lamps,' when you can get the same gospel truth over by using English pure and undefiled?"

"My son," he parried back, "that isn't slang—it's the language of the people."

And so I have chosen the "language of the people" to get over some observations on the foibles and frailties of humankind; and, more especially, some sidelights on those who play more or less important rôles in the Romance of Business.

—by the Author

We are apt to underrate the moral quality of a man's regular vocation, his daily task, his business; to look somewhere apart from this for his opportunity to achieve character and do good.

But, to those who have the eye to see and the ear to hear, there is much that is fine, much that is characterful, and much that is serio-comic in the daily routine of the workaday world.

To tap the rich vein of mirth that runs through the lighter side of America's business life; to bring out the high-lights and the bright spots that lurk in human nature—this has been my object in writing these Fables that teach without preaching and that serve a moral purpose even as they entertain.

I am indebted to the Fairchild Company, Publishers, for permitting me to embody in this volume a number of Fables that originally appeared in their publications.

—H. A. S.

The HOUSE of a THOUSAND COBWEBS

A Fable *about the lad who cleaned house*

YOUNG MUSTY was an Old Man at Thirty-five. At this Age he had lapsed into the Business founded by his Great Grand Dad and had relapsed into the slouch-before-the-fireside Attitude of his august Forebears.

In point of Nativity he was American. But, so far as Business Methods go, he was essentially Chinese. He operated on the bland, Smokum-okum Principle that what was good enough for his Ancestral Strain was good enough for him.

True—the Business had begun to give off the Dank Odor of Dry Rot. But, since there were Cobwebs Aplenty in his alleged Cabeza, his Olfactory Senses were oblivious to said Odor.

The Employees of Musty's Emporium were sober and sedate. Also they were stiff, stilted and stereotyped. All affected the same Garb and all belonged to the same Denominational Church. All took Pride in being aligned with such an Old Line House and all energetically opposed anything

designed to inject some Modern Elixir into the Life of the Stagnant Business.

They worshipped at the Shrine of Convention and those who even flirted with Progress were branded Heretics, Infidels, Upstarts and No-Accounts in general. They would point with Pride at their own Decorousness and would view with Alarm the Tendency towards Pep and Buoyancy in Modern-Day Business.

Had it not been for the Foresight of the original Mr. Musty the Enterprise founded by him would have long since toppled into the Limbo of Decadent Dreams. But the Old Boy had pitched his Business Tent in what was destined to be a Strategic Site and so had left his Progeny a Heritage worth having.

The Business did not peter out in One Day any more than you can riddle a sturdy Fort full of Holes in one short Spasm. It takes Old Doc Time to undermine it—to ferret out the weak and vulnerable Spots in the Wall of Defense.

It was a gradual Process of Decay—the subtle Poisons of Inertia and Smug Satisfaction eating their Way into the very Vitals of the Business.

And so the House of Musty passed through one weary Régime after another until its very Essence had been sapped and there was nothing left but the outward Hulk of an Enterprise once in its prime.

It was at this Juncture—as they say in those exciting Sherlock Guck Stories—that Bob Banning blew into Town and blew up to Musty's. Bob's full Label in the Official Nomenclature of his Family was Robert Musty Banning. But, to all intents and practical purposes, he was just Plain Bob.

Bob never let his Monicker worry him any. And it didn't! He always figured that one Handle is as good as another provided you know when to hook on to the Buzz-Wagon of Opportunity.

Bob was just out of School but had crammed in some mighty helpful Business Experience 'tween Semesters and he was anxious to get into the Fray. To be sure, some of his Ideas on Business were a wee bit Utopian, but they were fresh and clean and worth trying.

Some of the staid and sombre Folk at Home thought him a bit queer and offish, but affirmed



*He operated on the bland, smokum-
okum principle that what was good
enough for his ancestral strain was
good enough for him*

that he was a Likable Chap at that. While to others of the High and Mighty he was just too fly and flip and flighty.

The Merchants in his College Town out of whom he had wormed Ads for the *Campus Cleaner*—the official School Paper—were wont to laugh at his Ideas for stimulating Trade. But, allee samee, they would come to and come through.

Coming back, then, to Bob's Debut in Town—that memorable First Session with Mr. Musty, Proprietor of the Establishment which bore his Name, nearly took all the Breeze out of Bob's Sails. But he was game and veered right 'round on a Different Tack. He argued that he was entitled to a Job not because he was Musty's Nephew but *in spite* of it. And, what is more, he got it!

It didn't take Bob long to get his Bearings. And, when he did, he gave Vent to his Feelings by one long, low and mournful Whistle—thereby rudely disturbing a Neat Breastwork of Dust on a Ledge nearby.

After doping it out from every Angle, Bob decided to pitch in and dust off as many Cobwebs as

he could lay Hands on. He was no Messiah—this Bob Banning. He was not projected out of a Clear Sky to save Musty's from crumpling up in the Dust of its own making. He was no Genius, no Marvel, no Medicine Man, no Miracle-Worker. His Ideas were neither Quixotic nor Chaotic. He was simply imbued with the Romance of Business.

And, he had two Splendid Gifts. One was Perspective—the other Initiative. He hadn't won any Scholarships in Mathematics and he didn't know a Rap about the Fourth Dimension. But he *did* know how to size up a proposition *myu pronto!*

As for Starting Things on his own Hook, he had formulated for his own Use the characteristic Declaration that he who hesitates is *bossed!*

During those First Few Months that Bob tried to put some of his Ideas into practical and profitable Operation, he was about as popular as a Flock of Rodents at a Suffragette Convention. It is true, of course, that he had Musty's inane Consent to go ahead. But Grim Precedent stalked the Store and balked him at every Turn.

His first Sweeping Suggestion was—*Brighten Up!*

He advised the Salesmen to perk up and inject a little Color into their own Attire and some Atmosphere into the Store Proper. He explained that Occasional Laughter in a Business House is not irreverent and that a Man prefers to be smiled, not scowled, into a difficult Purchase. He showed them the Difference between Courtesy and Mock Humility and added that Hauteur was just as much out of place as Servility.

In a friendly Chat with the Floormen he demonstrated how easy it was to get a little Personal Interest into their Voices when directing a Patron storeward. He showed how important was their Function of welcoming the Customer. He emphasized that their Job embraced much more than the giving of Perfunctory Directions to the General Effect that "Men's belts are first aisle to the left!"

At the cool, diffident Salesmen he leveled some new Conceptions in Salesmanship. He urged that when a Man came in to buy a Suit it was a human Business Transaction—not necessarily a lolling Social Event to be chronicled in the next day's Society Colyum.

Besides, he was a Stickler for correct Business



*He explained that occasional laughter in
a business house is not irreverent and
that a man prefers to be smiled, not
scowled, into a difficult purchase*

English. He showed the Selling Staff how much could be accomplished by Questions couched in Positive Terms. He instanced that a Man buying a Shirt does not wish to be asked, "How long do you wear your sleeves, sir?"

He presented to the Store Management the concrete Fact that the Window Displays—placed, as they were, in the very Vortex of Trade—represented the most potential Method of Attracting Sales; and that, therefore, it was no Mandate of the God of Business that the Window Backgrounds could not be changed once in a while.

He delineated the real Mission of Window Display Cards. He urged that they could be made to really Say Something instead of allowing them to assume Conventional Attitudes and voice Hoary Platitudes.

What's more, he completely revamped the Advertising of Musty's. And he did it successfully because he brought a New Viewpoint to bear.

First—he injected some Amiability and Human Interest into the Advertising, displacing the stiff, formal and spasmodic *Announcements* hitherto employed. He made the trite, commonplace Things

of Store Life decidedly interesting. He sugar-coated nothing but invested his Business News with an Intrinsic Sensation that could not help but appeal.

He made Sound Capital out of the Stability and Integrity of the Business and played up their Service and their Guarantee that never played hide-and-seek. He showed that his Store was not only a good Place to buy but a *safe* Place—a Place where Fathers could send their Youngsters with the Assurance that they would get a Four-Square Deal.

He unearthed and rejuvenated the Store's Mailing List on the profitable Assumption that the Old-Line Customers would not be shocked occasionally to get a tasty Folder or Booklet detailing a current Store Event.

He made the Delivery Department a pertinent Source of Exploitation and made the Public understand the seeming Paradox that a Sale is only half begun when it's done.

These and other Things did Bob Banning perform for the revered House of Musty. True—it was hard, inexpressibly hard—to peel off the Wrap-

pings of Decay—to tear away the Shroud of Sanctity that had been cast over Medieval Ideas and Mummified Practices. But he did it!

The Transition did not take place in a Day or a Week or a Month. The Metamorphosis was slow—inevitably slow. But out of it rose a Newer and Better and Brighter Business.

MORAL: You never know how many cobwebs there are in your attic until some one whisks in with a duster.

All to the Mustache

WHEREIN *is recorded the tale
of a discerning youth who laid
siege to a lady's heart in a
manner at once peculiar
and tonsorial*



ALL *to the* MUSTACHE

A Fable *about the misplaced eyebrow that prospered*

LOOK him over from Hold to Mizzen Mast and Maurice Manning wasn't such a bad Chap at that. About the worst they could say about him was that he chewed Gum incessantly and was partial to Blondes.

But, then, lots of us are in the Same Dory with Maury—eh what? Come now, 'fess up!

By dint of patient Plugging and Perseverance and much burning of the Midnight Mazda, Maurice had catapulted himself into the Swivel Chair of the Assistant Advertising Manager. Come to think of it, *catapulted* isn't the Word. He *caterpillared* in.

Just how popular he was with the Boys in the Outer Office can be gauged by the fact that they had bestowed upon him the Subtle Sobriquet of *The Worm*. Perhaps it was because he was forever chewing Wrigley's. Again, they may have figured he traveled on his Belly as do some Portly Personages with Pronounced Promontories.

He was a typical Plodder, was Maurice. You couldn't, by any stretch of the Mental Trapeze,

label him temperamental. Calm, serene, unruffled—you'd think he had been born on Lake Placid.

Earnest, willing, conscientious, competent—Maurice was any and all the Adjectives commonly bestowed on themselves by sanguine Business School Graduates when Replying to your Advertisement in Today's *Times* for a Fifteen Dollar-a-Week Office Assistant. Only, Maurice was there with the Goods—very much so.

But, strange as it may seem, none of the Girls in the Office were especially crazy about him. All admitted he was an Accommodating Little Fellow and terribly competent. But that was all.

Aside from the Slavey who doled out his Eats at Madame Granola's Boarding House, nary a Member of the Feminine Contingent had ever cast Meaningful Glances at him. Nor had any of them ever given him the least bit of Encouragement. About as far as any of them went was to accept a Julep Mint from Maurice as the Salivary Occasion offered.

But there was One Little Blonde in particular on whom Maurice had had an Awful Case ever

since she'd unpacked her Charms and her Note Book. This particular Specimen of Feminine Architecture was the Boss' Own Steno and, say what you please about the Boss, he certainly knew how to pick 'em. The Big Chief has always maintained that a Good-Looker inspired him to bigger and brighter and more benign Thoughts. In short, he needed her in his Business.

And Maurice had it doped out the same way. He needed her in *his* Business. But this particular Offspring of Eve never looked at our Hero unless she had to, and when she did, she made him feel as if he'd forgotten Something.

Now Maurice wasn't altogether a Grouch albeit a Phrenologist might have discovered a Bump of Crabbiness in his Dome. But gradually it dawned on him that when it came to making Overtures to the Fair Sex a la Bee-a-trice Fair-fax, he was very much *persona non grata*—as the Highbrows put it.

"Humph!" you grunt by way of interpolation. "What did he want to monkey 'round the Dames for—a nice little Chap like that? Why didn't he leave well enough alone?—the Big Gob!"

Well, you see, that's the Hopeful Part of it: it

showed Brother Maurice was human. And it got his Ram to see how the Girls made a Fuss over these Nincompoops who hadn't an Idea in their Heads—or a Brilliant Epigram at their Tongues' End but, who—

Quick, Watson, my Ever-Ready—Flash!—Flash—an I-D-E-A! The very thing! He would do it! What if the Fellows did kid him about it? You couldn't pull any kind of a Martyr Stunt these days without encountering Derisive Guffaws! Yes, he would!—blast his Top-Piece if he didn't! *He would grow a Mustache!*

How? What? When? Why? Patience, Patricia, read on!

To be sure, Maurice appreciated that at his period of Adolescence he couldn't expect a Tonsorial Harvest. But he figured he could keep the Hedges trimmed so as to make it look like a Good-sized Crop held in Leash.

No sooner had he conceived his great, Danderine Idea than he proposed to put it into Execution. Upon second thought, it seemed advisable to defer the Landscape Effect until his Vacation hove to, which was only a matter of a Week or Two.

While on his Vacation Maurice assiduously cultivated his Mustache and made Two Blades grow where none grew before. Day after day he pirouetted before the Mirror and observed the beneficent Effects of Intensive Cultivation.

Even before he left the Barb-wired Precincts of the Farm where he had been vacationing, Maurice noticed the Hired Girl had begun to oogle-google him. This, decidedly, was a New Experience. He didn't know whether she had gone batty in this Adamless Eden or whether it was the Mustache—so called by Extreme Tonsorial Courtesy. At any rate, he gave the Mustache the Benefit of the Doubt. Believe me, it needed it!

On the Train back to the City, into whose Voracious Maw had toppled Maurice and thousands like him, he observed that, while the "News Butcher" had snickered at sight of his Acquisition, several Young Women Passengers had cast shy but approving Glances at his Thoughtful Countenance.

Maurice felt the warm Glow of Accomplishment permeate his Entire Being. Sitting up and taking notice now—weren't they? Said Glow was elec-



But there was one little blonde in particular on whom Maurice had had an awful case ever since she'd unpacked her charms and her note book

trical in its Tonic Effect. It must have brought at least one more Hair Follicle to the Region of his Upper Lip.

But Maurice, vain though he was becoming, was too much of a Campaigner to place Sole Reliance on the Hirsute Adornment of his Physog—as those uncouth Sport Writers dearly love to phrase it. This was going to be merely *le piece de resistance a la Ed. Pinaud*—savvy?

When it got bruited about in the Office that *The Worm* had not alone turned but had returned, be-mustached, be-mannered and be-manicured, the Young Ladies Present craned their Elf-like Necks to see the Innocent Little Thing that had caused all this Hubbub. With few exceptions, they took pains to assure Maurice that it was “positively becoming” and, Goodness! Gracious!—why hadn’t he thought of it before?

Maurice accepted this Flood of Feminine Ecstasy with the utmost Nonchalance and proceeded to follow up this Ante by hiring a Strange Young Girl to write him about a Half Dozen Letters a day, Sundays included. These were to be addressed to him at the Office, most assuredly.

Maurice told the Girl he didn't care especially what she said or didn't say. The Big Thing was to use Stationery that was *distingué* and to have the Chirography essentially feminine. The Salutation in each Affectionate Instance was to be something like *Heart of Mine, Honey-bunch, You Dream Man, My Great Big Boy*—nothing tamer than *Maury Darling*. On occasion, the Recipient of these Saccharine Messages would leave one of these Affectionettes lying carefully careless on his Desk so that those who ran by might read.

Did it work? Say, does a Frog croak?

He also cooked up a deal with the Slavey at the Boarding House who had a Silvery Voice even if she did dress like Mary Pickford in "Hulda from Holland." The Idea was for her to phone him at the Office at least once a day, ask him how he felt, whether he got Home all right the night before, thank him for the Box of Huyler's or Orchids he hadn't sent and, in general, to let some of her Boundless Passion and Undying Love ooze over the Wires so his Operator would be sure to get an Earful, good and plenty. Slavey was admonished further never to hang up without murmuring

“Goodbye, Dear” and to say it tremulously as if it severed her very Heart Strings to disconnect.

Did it work? Say, does a Grasshopper hop?

To supplement this he arranged with the Handy Man about Madame Granola’s Abode to call him up at certain, prescribed Intervals when he would be sure to be *out* of the Office. When the Operator asked Mr. Handy Man for the Message, that was his Cue to smear a little Three-in-One on his Vocal Chords—ahem!—and say that Mr. Gotkale was speaking and that he had merely wished to know if Mr. Manning’s Engagements would permit him to dine with him at the Club that night.

Did it work? Say, do Jersey ’Skeeters bite?

The Fifth Spoke in Maurice’s Campaign Wheel was to arrange with another *partis criminis* to ’phone his Office and leave word that Crepe and Drape, Exclusive Fifth Avenoo Tailors, wished him to come down for his Fittings as soon as convenient.

Did it work? Say, does your Pet Corn signal Blue Jay when the Weather’s turning?

It wasn’t very long before Things began to happen. Results were due and Maurice knew he



He made two blades grow where none grew before. Day after day he pirouetted before the mirror and observed the beneficent effects of intensive cultivation

was going to cash in on his Cumulative Effect before long.

He did! All the Sweet Young Things in the Office were right on tap with the Bright Good Morning Smile and even the Little Blonde began to hover 'round more than seemed necessary.

Now this Ravishing Creature was what they call a Decided Blonde. Only, some of the less favored ones in the Office got catty and said it was evident that she'd only *decided recently*. Nevertheless, the Fact remains that she was Considerable Cuckoo in her Own Little Right—even the Boss admitted it.

When this Tidal Wave of Popularity began to inundate Friend Maurice the Little Blonde in Question was right there with the Water Wings and kept Abreast of the Times. Pretty soon she found herself taking a Mental Inventory of Maurice who suddenly loomed large on the Horizon of Desirability. He measured up pretty well, she found, and she wondered who that Hussy was that called him up every day and dispensed those Monosyllabic Gurglings found only in Cupid's Compendium for Clandestine Croonies.

Throughout this time, you understand, Maurice played his Cards like a Regular and kept rather aloof from the Office Bunch. Indeed, the Casual Observer was left to infer that it was a Relief for him occasionally to get away from the Arena of Ardent Admirers.

But the Little Blonde took it so to Heart that even the Boss—who was a good Diagnostician and who recognized all the Symptoms of the Incipient Stage—asked her who HE was and whether he could be of any Paternal Help in the matter.

After considerable Blushing, Bleating and other Functional Disturbances of the Sympathetic Nervous System, Little Blondey 'fessed up and baffed the Whole Thing.

And thus it happened that the Boss—who was a Good Samaritan even if he did rap Prohibition—passed the Ball to Maurice, told him not to fumble it, and said he didn't deserve as fine a Girl as that but he would do what he could in the Hymeneal Matter.

After that it was only a Short Distance to the Little Church Around the Corner, and of all the Blessings and Benedictions lavished on the Radiant

Couple none were so much appreciated as that which made its Presence felt every ensuing Saturday in Maurice's Envelope.

And now after a Lapse of some Time, as they say on the Theatre Program, the only Dark Streak on Maurice's Horizon of Marital Bliss is whether he should be a Good Soldier and outline the *modus operandi* to Wifey. But he thinks that when the Little Stranger eventually comes out with his Opening Announcement it will be a more Strategic Time for Father to disclose the Plan of Campaign that produced such corking good Results.

MORAL: *Don't envy the chaps who corral
the ladies. Get a lass-o yourself!*

The Late Mr. Jazz

WHEREIN *is recorded the tale
of a chap who was neither a
bee nor a lounge lizard but
who danced away his pre-
cious hours forever
and aye*



The LATE MR. JAZZ

A Fable about the clerk with the bumble foot

TERPSICHORE must have stood in high favor with the Gods on that fateful day when Jeremiah Jazz was ushered into this Whirly-world of ours—for thus was his Name recorded on the flyleaf of the Family Bible.

By all the laws of Eugenics and Gravitation Jeremiah should have gone in for Folk Dancing and other Manifestations of the Fine Arts. It really was too bad he hadn't been christened Vernon Tassle or Ted Fawn or he might have studded some Dancing Sky of his own. But Fate—demure little Devil that she is—puckered her brow and pouted her pert little lips, and neatly deposited Sir Jeremiah in a Stamping Ground no less prosaic than Hammock's Haberdashery. No telling what numbers roll out of the Dice-box when Life gets in its shaking hand.

Now Jeremiah was a pretty good Salesman—as Salesmen come and go. But Jeremiah's prime mission in Life was not how much Work he could crowd into the allotted span of toil, but how much Fun he could jam in after the Curfew had tolled

the Knell of parting day. Work was all right—a chap had to do a certain amount of Labor to get by. But where was the Harm in stepping out o' nights and seeing the city's sights? Gosh all hemlock, if a Fellow didn't get out and around while he was young and sprightly, what was the use of being dapper and enticing—eh, what? And why should a Duffer spend his evenings “improving his mind” when a Twinkling Little Damsel like Dorothy Dove was ready to act as his personal tutor in the High Art of Genuflection?

Youth must have its Fling and, after all, Business was such a Beastly Thing—a Bitter Pill to be swallowed every morning except Sunday and emitted every evening at the first swish after six. So our blithe little Jeremiah pursued the even Caruso of his way—dispensing genial Smiles of strong savor and striking flavor—until he became known up and down the Rialto as Jerry the Joy Boy. He knew all the road inns along the scooting way to Baron Short's, where a mellow Traveler might wax a degree mellower and roar with his tankard of “musty.” He followed in the wake of every new Step much after the fashion of a new-

foaled Colt trailing its Dam. He knew every Dance to every jot and tittle. And for sheer ethereal Pleasure—why, there was nothing like whisking along the polished floor with a lithesome little Lady clad in Pneumonia Draperies.

At such Dancing Fiestas it was only natural that one should crave a bit of Liquid by way of after-refreshment. "Make 'em tall and heave 'em high," was Jerry's usual laconic instruction to the white-clad Ambassador who ministered to the Thirst of famished folk in this Spirit-ual Oasis.

And our mutual Jerry always was generous with his Emoluments—yea, verily! No piking Lad was he! As the gallant Cavalier who paid for each round as it came round, Jerry was permitted usually to monopolize the Conversation. Once he got started he was a regular Gabber from Gabberville—his Tongue was hung in the middle and loose at both ends. He couldn't hold a Store Secret any more than a chronic Old Maid can go to bed without looking under said bed for the he-man Burglar who invariably disappoints her by never showing up.

And so Jerry would regale his fellow revelers with Anecdotes—some real but for the better part



*For sheer ethereal pleasure there was
nothing like whisking along the pol
ished floor with a lithesome little lady
clad in pneumonia draperies*

imaginary—designed to instill into their receptive Think-tanks how stale was the Mind of his Boss, Mr. Hammock, and how swingy was his own. When it came to overworking the Personal Pronoun in his own behalf Jerry was simply there a Million. Indeed, the casual Listener was given to infer that, were it not for the Sagacity and Perspicacity of this modest Mr. Jazz, the prosperous Establishment of Hammock's would have long since taken up its abode in R. G. Dun's Mausoleum of Businesses That Were But Aren't.

Things were going along swimmingly enough until one fine Day in the month of May when Jerry was respectfully invited to visit the Sanctum of the Boss. Jerry did not lay any special emphasis on this Invitation until he hove to on the star-board side of Mr. Hammock's moorings and observed the Clouds gathering on the Horizon. "Looks like Rain," Jerry threw out by way of Camaraderie. "More like a Squall, I should say," came back Mr. Hammock in similar kind. And the Boss was considerable Weather-Prophet in his own right. Well, anyway, it was considerable Squall, as the Nurse going off duty in the Nursery

remarks to the Handsome Interne making his rounds. By the time the Boss got through Jerry felt about as important as six bits in a peanut shell.

In his gay and flippant moments Jerry had often averred that Old Man Hammock looked like a determined Old Duck—in fact, he had a Jaw like a miniature Snow-plow. Yet, when Jerry got outside the Boss' Threshold and came up for Air, so to speak in the language of the U-Boaters, he figured that Old Hammock's bawling out was just a lot of Dead Talk stuffed with big Words and strung with Wires. Notice that I say he "figured" that way. But, while Jerry may have been a World-beater at the newest Tickle-toe and a Riot with the Feminine Contingent of Pulchritude, he never was a candidate for a C. P. A. degree. The net result of his Trial-balancing was that, a week or two thereafter, he was told gently but firmly that Hammock's would have to swing along without his Able Assistance.

Did Jerry the Joy Boy take it hard to Heart? Nay, nay, Mazurka! Why worry about Jobs when Good Men were always in demand? And why work for a Bolsheviky Boss who insisted on

knowing what a Man did with his Evenings when it was none of his bloomin' business?

So Jerry deftly affiliated himself with a Store of lesser Prestige. What if the Weekly Envelope were not quite so corpulent in design? What if the Surroundings were not quite so restful to a person of his aesthetic Tendencies? What if the Customers were not quite so *recherché* and *distingué*? (Ah yes, Monsieur, it's a beautiful language.)

Besides, Jerry was going to turn over a New Leaf. To this end he bethought himself of a Plan of Pseudo-Industry that would surely bring him into the Good Graces of the Management. The Plan, stripped of its Garnish and Varnish, was simply to work like a Beaver while he was being watched, but to quit propelling the Trowel the moment the keen Observer hied himself to Other Pastures. When the Floorman had his Eyes preened on Jerry he would work like a Trojan. He would be as busy as a Bee in a Tar Barrel. But all the Work he did when he was not under Surveillance you could pack into an Ant's Ear without impairing its hearing.



Jerry did not lay any special emphasis on the invitation until he hove to on the starboard side of Mr. Hammock's moorings and observed the clouds gathering on the horizon

Great idea, Jerry! But, as I say, he was some neat little Figurer and in his reckoning he forgot the salient fact that a man's individual Sales-book is a pretty good index to a man's individual Industry. And so—when sales in Jerry's Neck of the Woods began to slump diligently and with steadfast fervor, he was told gently but firmly that the Management would have to dispense with his August Presence beginning the week thereafter.

By this time, Jerry was beginning to lose some of his Sunny Disposition. What a Thankless World this was, anyway! Also, he had begun to cultivate a steadily growing Peeve against his erstwhile Employers, against the necessity of Mundane Toil, against the Universe as a whole and against Mr. Jazz himself. If anyone would fain nudge him in the Ribs and point out the error and terror of his Ways, Jerry would kindly inform the well-meaning Counselor that unless he laid off of this Billy Sunday stuff, there would be Flowers at the house of Mr. Would-Be-Evangelist the next morning, but he would not be there to smell them.

Even when he got a job as an "Extra" in the hit-'em-lively Establishment of Hank & Yank—he

couldn't understand why Mr. Hank, who was commonly acknowledged a Good Sport, should frown when he saw him time and again whirling away the hours in the Cafe Parfait and other Perfumed Palaces for Gladsome Gliders.

And now, dear patient-eyed reader, I should like to top off with the usual Happy Ending and show how Jerry Jazz suddenly took another Hitch in his Belt, changed his Tune and watched his Step until he had re-climbed all the rungs of the Fabled Ladder that leads to the Balmy Plains of Success. But, alas, I have gone and done it with my little Waterman and I cannot lie!

So, I must perforce leave Jerry as I found him the other night—poor as Job's Turkey, but proud as Lucifer—seemingly carefree, but actually worried—and cussing his luck to the lilting tune of "I Should Pucker and Be Perturbed!"

There he sat eyeing the Dingy Tint of his Hem-Stitched Room with disdain and wondering what was happening to this Hectic World of ours. How could the Cocktails he imbibed the evening before find reflection in Indifference to Customers, perhaps Discourtesy, Lost Sales and all-around

Inefficiency? Why should the Boss concern himself with what Jerry did evenings—just so long as he showed up on the tick of the clock every day? Where were the Good Old Days when men might play Stud and drink Suds the night through and show up bleary-eyed but game the morning after? Good night, Jericho!—what was this hifalutin' World coming to, anyway?

And so, in the fullness of his bitter heart, Jerry the Joy Boy laid himself down to sleep and dreamt—of what? Of the day when he would mend his Ways and come up smiling? Of the day when he would flaunt his own transcendent Establishment in the Marts of Trade? Nay, nay, Cleoportia! He dreamt—ah! Treacherous Morpheus!—he dreamt that he was whisking along the polished floor of the Cafe Parfait with lithesome, blithesome Dorothy Dove!

MORAL: Time's whirligig turns apples of promise into ashes of regret.



Go Thou and Sin Some More

WHEREIN *is recorded the tale of
a society matron who craved
a place in the sun but who
wouldn't admit it for
the world*



GO THOU *and* SIN SOME MORE

A Fable *about the lady who loved the glare*

ONCE upon a Time there was a Young Society Matron named Clara Calcium who had carved for herself an enviable Niche in Society's Hall of Fame. But, Gadzooks and Gosh All Fish-Hooks!—how she did hate Publicity!

That is, she gave you that Impression *sub rosa*. But deep down in her Heart of Hearts (Boy, page Mr. Trump!) she reveled in it. She laved herself in it and sated her Soul with it. To her it was Ambrosia, Nectar and Mellin's all in one Airy Package.

The only Medico in the World who could soothe her Social Ills and Aches was Doctor Publicity. For he alone could dispense the Celestial Balm of a Three Column Caption and an Art Photograph (Copyright by Underhood & Underhood) on the page dedicated to the Escapades of the Elite.

It was a case of twinge-twinge, tingle-tingle. Then her Social Secretary would tinkle-tinkle a la Alexander Graham, and there—from out the

Society Page of tomorrow's *Daily Screech*—Milady Calcium would twinkle-twinkle at you.

Whenever she got unusually wrought up and had a Fit of Nerves she wouldn't give vent to her Outraged Feelings by opening up the Lachrymal Ducts. Nay, nay, Lucina—the Water Rate was too high!

Instead, she would pour her Story into the listening, not to say glistening, Ear of the Society Editor. And what a Dear Little Creature she was! So sweet and sympathetic and so full of Discernment and Understanding. My, my!

If you got to know this Sublime Personage quite well she would wax confidential and tell you how she just loathed to be interviewed. But—

She wouldn't tell you how many times she had set her Little Big Ben so she could come out of Morpheus' Embrace betimes and see what that fussy and fuzzy-looking Sob Sister had said about her. Yea, verily, the Ways of Society *are* devious.

She had a Creed of her own—did Clara Calcium. She paid attention to Trifles on the Theory that a Genius must have an Infinite Capacity for taking Pains as well as Gains. And she took both!

She had dipped deep enough into the Chafing Dish of Ancient History to know that the Cackle of a Goose had saved Rome from surprise and ruin. So she kept her Aural Appendage pretty close to the Turf and never passed up a Bet.

She knew that Silence is Golden and this explained why so many of her Sisters in Crime were always broke. And she knew that Pluck always wins—especially if she did the Plucking.

As a Purveyor of Things subtle and significant she ranked Ace-high. She operated on the conservative Theory that one Touch of Gossip makes the whole World chin. While her Daughter Caprice who had just issued from Madame Veneer's Finishing School (only highest priced Varnishes used) was wont to flit around the House in Imaginary Draperies on the nude and rude Theory that one Yard of Georgette Crepe covers a Multitude of Shins.

Most of us are lucky if our Five Senses are up to Snuff—if not to Sniffles. But our Dear Little Clara was gifted with a Sixth Sense—a Sense of Rumor.

She was adroit at starting Rumors about the



*. . .so she could come out of Mor-
pheus' embrace betimes and see
what that fussy and fuzzy-looking
sob sister had said about her*

Betrothal of her Offspring Clarice to every betitled and bedizzened Notable in the Land. It got so bad that, to keep tab of the Counts in the Case, her Social Secretary had to buy a Burroughs.

As for the nominal Master of the House, he was just that—*nominal!* He began, and ended, there. His Club Comrades labeled him a Regular Fellow—the kind of Chap who could warm the Cockles of your Heart. But with a Wife of Clara's fiery Type he had about as much Chance as the Proverbial Snowball has to be congealed in the Nether Regions.

He had been in Hymen's Bondage long enough to know that Men think they fall *in* Love (whatever that is) when they really fall *for* it. And during those rare, peaceful Spasms when Clara Dear wasn't yanking him up for something or other, he would flop wearily into his Library Chair and wade through the *Britannica* looking for Close-ups of Savages who had never adopted the Chainy Custom of Matrimony.

He observed invariably how happy they looked. And then he would wish—but, oh Shucks, if Wishes were Aeroplanes, Elephants would fly!

But to Clara, her Hubby was just a diddering, doddering Dunce—a blithering, blubbering, bloom-in' Idiot who had kept out of the Psychopathic Ward only because of his plethoric Dough Bag. In short, Good Wife's Opinion of Friend Husband was summed up in that great cryptic expression, *ne coco domo*.

Clara's chief Hobby was to pan Hubby. And whenever she pulled out her Assay Kit he essayed not a Murmur. For, didn't he savvy that her Analysis would show lots and lots of Solid Ore but not even a pallid Streak of Gray Matter? So, what was the Diffy-diff?

Whenever Clara could call a Quorum she would lament that her Hubby—whom everybody thought was just the Grandest Thing Ever—wasn't a bit sympathetic. It *was* funny—wasn't it?—how a Man could get a Rep for being kind and attentive and considerate when he was really morose and crabby and grumpy?

And besides, it *was* hard—wasn't it?—to find some one who *really understood* you—some one who could peer into the Windows of your Soul with Real Feeling—some one who could gaze into your

Limpid Pools and rave about the Heavenly Ripples reflected therein? Y-e-s, it *was* hard—wasn't it?

And then the Quorum would retire into Secret Session and aver that the Poor Dear didn't know how fortunate *she* really was. If she only had *their* Beastly Hubbies to deal with—what then? Why, she'd have some real, honest-to-badness cause for her Outbursts of Poutish Petulance. So she might as well put *that* in her Lamp and light it. Now, there! Flicker, flicker!

Among the Slavies in the Household it was Ye Common Gossip that whenever Monsieur Hubby tried to pull the Anvil Chorus on any of her Ambitious Schemes, Madame Clara would be sure to register Deep Disdain.

Then she would dam this up with some mild, imported Profanity and inform him that she didn't want him to look at her in that Tone of Voice.

And that was all there was to it! By the Time she got through he was hoisted on his own Petard. So what, pretty prithee, was the Use?

Altogether, Hubby was rather a prosaic, matter-of-fact Chap whose Idea of a loudly quiet Time was



*It was hard—wasn't it?—to find someone who
really understood you—someone who could
gaze into your limpid pools and rave about
the heavenly ripples reflected therein*

to puff away at a Choice Havana the while he reveled in the Intricacies of Ruskin and the Subtleties of Addison.

He went in for Sports about as much as Three Star Hennessy went in for Soft Drinks. He knew as much about Bagging Quail, for instance, as a Buddhist Priest knows about Kelly Pool.

But Clara Dear insisted that he be accoutred in full Hunting Regalia so as to get one of those "I-don't-really-care-to-pose" Pictures in *The Sheep-head Review* and other Periodicals perused by the Coupon-clipping Contingent.

And what a busy-dizzy Clubwoman our Clara was! Every time Billy Sunday calendared in to clean up the Town, she would have the Oily President of her Club anoint her Chairman of the Committee for the Suppression of Vice. This would, of course, necessitate relatively frequent Limousine Excursions into Regions not especially covered in our Eighth Grade Geographies.

Upon such Occasions she would volunteer the Sinformation that she didn't mind being dragged through Miles of Vice to glimpse a few Rods of Virtue. And besides, one would be apt to see so

many i-n-t-e-r-e-s-t-i-n-g Things (Class in Deep Breathing will now exhale).

So you can see that, all in all, our Clara was a Live Wire when it came to distributing the Current of her Thoughts about Town.

She Knew that a Man is as Old as his Arteries and she added that a Woman is as Old as her Knees. Accordingly, she did not propose to become fat and flabby and fatigued at forty. Neither did she propose to relapse into the pudgy-squdgy Attitude assumed by those Chronic Society Matrons whose Genuflections are confined to their Activities in the Rocking Chair Squadron.

All of which is designed to show that our Dear Little Clara was muchly human. And whether it was a Poodle Dog Show she was fostering, or a Red Cross Benefit, or an Ultra-New Thought Club, or an Anti-Noise or Anti-Smoke Campaign, or a New Home for Wayward Waifs—she would always have everything rigged up to the Queen's Delirium so that the Sob Squad could go to it in Big League Fashion.

But, alas, when the Poipers did *not* come through with the Printed Delicacies she so relished—that

was Clara's Cue to register Indignation done to a turn and served on a platter of art. And whether she got a Half Inch Squib or a Half Page Spread she would always murmur petulantly, "The stingy things!"

And yet, it *was* funny—wasn't it?—how she did hate Publicity!

MORAL: *The bigger they are, the harder
they fall—for it.*

The Fiasco of Flavius Flivver

*WHEREIN is recorded the tale of
the fledgling who tried to pitch
in the big leagues before he had
warmed a bench in
the bushes*



The FIASCO of FLAVIUS FLIVVER

A Fable about the prodigy who petered out

ONCE Upon a Time there was a Chap named Flavius Flivver who was a regular Chip off the Old Block—with Emphasis on the Block. If anything, he was Chipper. What he didn't know about Advertising and Selling wasn't carved on Cleopatra's Needle. And there is considerable Carving on said Obelisk.

Flavius had just reached the Eligible Age where he was being invited out to all the House Parties engineered by meaningful and mercenary-minded Mammas. Upon such Occasions he would become the Center of an animated Group composed largely of Ripening Dianas and Venuses de Stylo.

Their Cue it was to hand out Plaudits Aplenty—to reel off Laughter upon the slightest Provocation—and, further, to assure guileless Flavius that he was just too clever for anything!

No matter what Flavius said—whether he spilled something from Last Year's *Life* or pulled a Pun that had come out of the Maternity Ward about

the same time he had—the Appreciative Audience was there with the Ripples of Laughter and Staccato of Applause.

You see, dear reader, our Flavius was born under the Auspices of a Constellation his Official Astrologer couldn't exactly locate; but everybody else could. The common, Milk-and-Mush Name for this particular Starless Star was *Nobody Home*.

The morning after such a Successful Seance, Flavius would show up at the Office with his Cerebellum Stock away above par. Not even the Rank Rot he doled out in his Dictation nor the Bulls in Lingo his demure Stenog corrected, could yank him off his Pearly Pedestal.

There were Two Things about which Flavius would wax most enthusiastic. One was his Alma Mater and the other was Flavius Flivver. Start him off on Any Subject and he would be sure to wind up with the Big Discourse on Flavius Flivver, A. B. Which meant, in the Parlance of those who knew him well, Flavius Flivver, All Bone.

While at College, Flavius had become quite adept at the Fox-trot and could execute any Gyration or Gondola-glide a la Vernon Castle. But the

Pedantic Profs in their own learned fashion had examined his Think-Tank and found it quite empty.

So that about the Time his Finals were due, Flavius Senior, who was a pretty shrewd Old Boy at that—out of sheer Goodness of Heart and as his Meagre Tithe to the God of Learning—announced a Munificent Gift to the University which cloistered his Filial Offspring.

Thus, by means devious and otherwise, Flavius cajoled his beloved Alma Mater into giving him a Sheepskin with his Name lettered in Old English, and which would look swell in his Den, right next to the Picture of that Cutey Pony in the latest Giggly-Girl Show.

After a Finishing Trip Abroad, Flavius wasn't any too anxious to enter the Flivver Factory but Pater insisted. Accordingly, Flavius was made Father's Official Oracle and Coadjutor in Crime.

When Flavius entered the Flivver Fort he was asked his Forte which was writing the Advertising. For how else could he disburse the Wisdom of the Ages and the Prattle of the Sages that he had stored up in his Mental Silo? To be sure, he had



Upon such occasions Flavius would become the center of an animated group composed largely of Ripening Dianas and Venuses de Stylo

been Joke Editor of his College Paper and he knew how to cull Humor out of the acknowledged Culeries by the Simple Expedient of a Scissors and a Pot of Paste. Besides, hadn't he read a Raft of Books on Efficiency and the Psychology of Advertising and a lot of other Fool Stuff?

The Advertising Manager, to whom the Novitate was turned over for bridling, asked him if he could write good, sane, Yankee-Doodle Copy. Could he? Well, rather! Didn't he know the I. C. S. Advertising Handbook from kivver to kivver?

The Copy turned out by Fledgling Flavius was just too terrible for Words. The Advertising Manager, who had cut his Wisdom Teeth long before Flavius had acquired his Milkers, got a polite Memorandum from the Purchasing Agent asking him for the Love of his Annual Report to go easy on the Blue Pencils.

Flavius had never been used to such Rough Treatment and he didn't propose to stand the Gaff. He would show the old carping Crab his Place in the Setting Sun!

Alas, things came to such a Blue Pass that one

Dark Day Flavius invaded his Father's Sanctum and averred that his Chief required the services of an Oculist and didn't know it. He affirmed that the Old Duffer was afflicted with Myopia and couldn't tell good Copy from bad. And, further, that his Business Perspective needed a new Coating of Mental Valspar.

The Poor Lad took it so to heart that Dear Old Dad was constrained to request the Master of Advertising Ceremonies to abdicate in favor of his Heir and Assign Forever. It was a case of anything to keep Peace in the Family.

The next morning Flavius' Chest Expansion registered a material Increase. Now he was in his Element! Now watch him pull a Stunt or two! He would make the Welkin ring! He would smite the Cymbals and call the Clans! He would make the Pavements resound to the Thwack-Thwack of Flivver's Fawncy Footwear! His Stuff was going to bang the Ultimate Consumer right on the Cabeza between the Two Glimmers! Yo Ho, and a Bottle of Rummy Ink!

About the First Act the New Prodigy performed was to put the Kibosh on the elaborate System of

Follow-Ups designed to line up Prospective Dealers. He argued that if a Fellow didn't buy right off the bat, what was the Use of wasting more Time on him? And, besides, didn't the Men on the Road get around Twice a Year and jog these Fellows up?

Act Number Two was to ring down the Curtain on the Trade Paper Advertising. What good did it do, anyway? And, again, he could use that Money in some corking good Magazines read by Debutantes, Dilettantes and other Damphool Decoctions of Society's Crucible. Where did these plain, plebeian Merchants come in for Attention anyway?

Act Number Three was to use One Cent Postage on his Sales Letters because they weren't read anyhow. And where, prithee, was the Sense in using Two Cent Postage on such Haphazard Stuff?

Act Number Four was to put out their New Catalog on Phoney Stock that made his Halftones look about as clean and dapper as a bleary-eyed Compositor the Morning After.

Act Number Five was to guillotine the series of Dealer-Helps which heretofore had been part of



*His stuff was going to bang the Ultimate
Consumer right on the cabeza between the
two glimmers. Yo ho, and a bottle of
rummy ink!*

the regular Advertising Program. Instead, he hired a Cheap Artist to get up a Dandy Poster that made their new Fall Model look like a Futuristic Interpretation of the Map of Italy.

And just look at all the Money he was saving the Firm! Zowie—wouldn't he make some Hit with the Old Man! He could picture in his Mind's Eye how the Governor would smile all over and pat him on the Back, alright, alright!

The Merry Carnage continued until one Perfect Day when Flavius was summoned rather peremptorily to the Sanctum Sanctorum and confronted with some Cold-Turkey Facts warranted to chill his Appetite for Dinner. It seemed that Sales had been hitting the Toboggan something fierce; and while the Big Chief wasn't developing Pedal Frigidity he naturally wanted to know whence cometh this awful Slump in Business.

Flavius rejoined that it couldn't be the Advertising because look at the Clever Stuff he was running in *Town Tattle* and *Newport Nips*. Graceful, stunning and tendril-like, dontcherknow!

But gruff Old Pater called the Turn by presenting some concrete Tabulations from Department

Heads indicating a woeful Lack of Interest upon the part of their Dealers. This was accompanied by the Suggestion, which was respectfully submitted, that it was about Time for some one else to cut the Cards and deal out a Helping Hand to the languishing Retailer.

The Upshot of it all was that the hard-headed Advertising Chief was offered a big Boost in Salary if he would only come back and unravel the Tangled Skeins.

And as for Flavius Flivver himself, Dear Old Dad has bought him a Luxuriant Yacht to cruise around in until he comes to. The Old Man says it's cheaper, too!

MORAL: *It's a wise father who knows
when to keep the prodigal son off the
home preserves.*

All is Not Bird that Twitters

WHEREIN *is recorded the tale of
an oldish bird who was good
to look upon but who never
chirped an original tune
in his life*



ALL *is not* BIRD *that* TWITTERS

A Fable *about the smooth article who wasn't*

JONATHAN FRONT, Esquire, was the height of decorum. From the tip-top of his Brunswick-Balke-Collender to the shined point of his hand-made Shoes, Jonathan was an Immaculate Decoction. He affected Spats, Vest Edging, a nonchalant Attitude, a mellow Voice and a decidedly Englishy Air that came in very handy upon Occasions numerous and plenty as the following narrative will show.

No one could gainsay the fact that Sir Jonathan was a Personage of eminent extraction. He looked it. Whether you piped him at close Range or spied him at a Distance a la lorgnette, he was always dressed with meticulous Care and Exactitude. (Ah yes, Maisie, bring in the tea tray.)

In short, Jonathan was there with the Pomp alright, alright—but the Belfry? Ah, wattawoil! If you tapped his Top-piece for some Real Matter you didn't get any more Response than if you had been knocking at the door of the Royal Tomb in

the Pyramid of Cheops. His only Tenant was the famous Firm of Mahogany, Ebony & Solid Dome.

But, none the less, Jonathan did not let you in on that. Quite to the contrary, he gave one the Impression that he was widely read, had traveled much, had suffered not at all, and had acquired that ineffable Poise and *savoir faire* which come only to a Man of the World.

Broach any Topic of Discussion and Jonathan would fetch out his acquiescent Smile and his inevitable Nod of "Ah yes, indeed—of course, of course!" Whether you were raving about a Painting by Whistler or a new Whistling Act on the Orpheum didn't make much difference. He was quite on Intimate Terms with either or both.

You might be talking about an Essay by Nietzsche or the Batting Average of the latest Baseball Phenom but you couldn't stump Mr. Jonathan. He was right there with the Verbal Burro and followed you up the Trail. Ah yes, indeed!

And travel? To be sure, Jonathan had never gone in for those stupid Culinary Tours but he had been pretty much everywhere you mentioned. Hadn't he lunched with Lord Southcliff the last

time he was in Lunnon? Hadn't he munched over the Affairs of the Day with Baron Munchausen at his Castle on the River Zinfandel? Hadn't he nibbled many a bag of Pop-corn Parisienne along the Bois de Bologna on many a balmy summer awfternoon? And as for Westminster Abbey—gracious yes! He knew the Distinguished Gentleman long before he had moved over from the East Side.

By this time you should be on Nodding Terms with the smooth, suave Specimen in question. So, then, let's moosie on.

Jonathan Front was, by Chance and Necessity, a Floorman in the large and imposing Establishment of Marshall, Vale & Co. His particular Function it was to keep an alert and omniscient Eye on the Horizon of his Particular Department and, truth to tell, Jonathan was very able in a monocle way.

He had come to Marshall Vale's with the Best Intentions in the World and with Impeccable Credentials from his previous Employers informing Mr. Whom-it-may-concern that Mr. Jonathan Front was a Man of Splendid Address, Gracious



Jonathan could say, "Ah yes, sir, that's quite alright," in a voice that made Mrs. Panne Velvet's Soothing Syrup seem like harsh treatment indeed for a colicky critter

Manner, and Very Able in his Way. Have the Butcher cut all these Fatuous Adjectives away from the Real Meat and what do you get? You're right: you get T-bone!

Jonathan had been brought up in the School that figured a Gracious Air and a Knowing Stare had it all over the Real Goods when it came to Ralph Waldo's famous Monologue on the Pay Envelope Question.

He could say, "Ah yes, sir, that's quite alright," in a Voice that made Mrs. Panne Velvet's Soothing Syrup seem like Harsh Treatment indeed for a Colicky Critter. There is no doubt that in the olden days of Hoop-skirted Ladies and Silver-buckled Gallants Jonathan would have been a Raging Riot. But, it so happeneth that in the present era whereof I speak, Jonathan was about as essential to our economic system as Curry Combs in a Garage.

The tragic part of it is that Jonathan thought he had the Establishment buffaloed as to his Real Merit. You certainly had to hand him a *Croix de Guerre* for the Superb Way he fussed and bustled around and the Suave Manner in which he dis-

pensed his peculiar brand of O-Cedar Mop Diplomacy. But everyone in the shop, from the Pert Youngster who was mascot of the team to the Big Twirler himself, had Jonathan's Real Record inscribed on their Mental Score Cards—and don't you forget it!

Nor must you suppose from this Appraisal of Jonathan that he had hurdled into his Forties without any Definite Accomplishments. Hardly so, hardly so! There were a number of things in which he was a Past Master. For example:

When it came to keeping furiously busy and accomplishing nothing Jonathan was nothing less than a Twenty-first Century Marvel. And when it came to the grand old game of saying "Yessir" to every Idea, idiotic or otherwise, submitted for his August Consideration, he was nothing less than a Labor Day Celebration. And as for horning in on the Attainments and Accomplishments of Marshall, Vale & Co.—and, more especially, his Particular Department—Jonathan simply had all the other Olympic Runners washed off the Track.

Also—and this you may already have surmised—when it came to the Highly Polished Art of

Passing the Buck, Jonathan Front, Esquire, was Grand Chancellor Commander of The Dramatic Order of Those Who Doeth Not but Passeth On. No Fleck on his Regalia, no Blot on his Escutcheon, no Black Mark on his Report Card—nay, nay, Therese—not if he could yelp it!

In the very nature of things, Jonathan had every reason to exult over the Smooth Current of his Job at Marshall Vale's. Came a day, however, when all was turned into Gall and Wormwood; for there came to him the Poignant Realization that although nearly every one else who had entered the Sacred Precincts of this Department had moved up Several Pegs, he was still taking his Daily Constitutional as Floorman.

He remembered, too, that none of these Fellows had any specially Pink Ribbons tied to their Physical Make-up. In fact, he distinctly recalled Joe Martin who was positively homely. Tecumseh Joe they called him—and a Scrapper from the word Go. Yet, somehow, he had managed to scalp his way to the Head of his own Department. And, come to think of it, Tecumseh Joe had never flopped for every Idea propounded by the Man-



*And as for horning in on the attainments and
accomplishments of the firm, Jonathan simply
had all the other Olympic runners washed
off the track*

agement although, when he did, he was certainly a Fiery Enthusiast.

And then there was Tom Lively who had never pulled any Blue Ribbons at the Handsome Harry Contests and whose Schooling had been sadly neglected. Fact is, Tom lacked all the Refined Touches and the Manicured Niceties that belong to a Gentleman of the Blood. And yet, in spite of this Appalling Handicap, Tom had Big Benned his way into the High-Salaried Realms Above.

By the time this Streak of Light broke through the Brain-Fog that constantly hovered around Jonathan, he had bucked up enough Courage to ask the Big Boss why, whence and wherefore his Permanent Residence in the Stagnant Pool Below. The Boss had a Heart and didn't want to hurt Jonathan's Feelings; but Jonathan insisted on the Bitter Truth, no matter how much the Iodine of the Boss' Remarks might smart.

So the Boss began rather irrelevantly by asking Jonathan if he had ever noticed that the Biggest Apples in this World come to the Chap who climbs right up after them and who doesn't give a rap if his Trousers do rip on the Upward Climb.

Having reached out with this High One, the Boss assured Jonathan that he did not wish to cast any Asparagus upon the latter's Ability and Ambitions. At the same time, he had often wondered whether Jonathan realized that, while a certain amount of Front is all right in a Man, what he has Back of his Ears counts for infinitely more. A Smooth Front, affirmed the Boss, was well and good for a Chap who aspired to a Quick-Lunch Reputation but was very much the Fromage for one who aspired to be a Real Business Man of Parts. You could nibble a Five-Minute Lunch without wising up to the Culinary Deficiencies of the Establishment but you couldn't wade through a Ten-Course Dinner without savvy'ing up to the fact that the Chef was either a Wonder or a False Alarm.

By the time the Boss got to the Finger Bowl Portion of his Analogy, Jonathan looked rather giddy in the Gills but the Surgeon kept right on with the Operation regardless of the Shock to the Patient. He asked Jonathan point blank as to whether he had ever made an Original Constructive Suggestion for the betterment of the Institution.

How had he proven himself more valuable to the Firm? What unusual Responsibilities had he shouldered? What if a Man did tackle a Thing and fall down—didn't Jonathan realize that a Man's Success is usually built on the Edifice of his Mistakes?

And ah yes, indeed, when had Jonathan had enough Temerity to say "No!" to any Suggestion he didn't believe in? Didn't he realize that People admired Other People who had the Courage of their Convictions? And, Jumping Jehosopha, if a Man didn't have any Convictions, why didn't he attend a Clearance Sale at Sing Sing or some other Idea Seminary and get some?

In fine, the Boss made it quite clear and transparent to Jonathan that, so far as Putting Up a Front was concerned, he was nothing less than a Whale; but that, when it came to Initiative and Business Acumen, he was not only a Poor Fish but a Poverty-stricken Aquarium. Jonathan, however, accepted his Fate with Codfish Calm, buckled on such Mental Armor as he could summon to the Cause, and on his downward Descent in the Store Jinrikisha decided that henceforth and hereafter

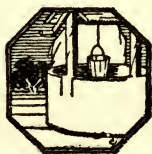
he would speak his Mind and show 'em. He would be there front, back and sideways—yea, even unto the Fourth Dimension!

He had no sooner hung his Head in that Frame of Mind when the Window Trimmer's Assistant approached him from afar and piped, "Say, Mr. Front, how about putting these Straw Hats in the Window—it's an awfully Warm Day for January, y'know?" To which Jonathan Front, Esquire—true to the Traditions of his Skittish Clan—replied, "Ah yes, indeed, of course, of course!"

MORAL: *You can't tell a man by his voice
—nor a bird by its plumage.*

Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water

WHEREIN *is recorded the tale of the
folk who wanted to be Autocrats of
the Breakfast Table without doing
enough manual labor to work
up an appetite*



HEWERS *of* WOOD *and* DRAWERS *of* WATER

A Fable about the folk who lived on cream puffs

WHAT do you suppose was the Cheapest Thing in the Establishment of Putton's? Titles! Everyone had a sonorous Title—from the Important Personage who greeted you at the door to the Big Mogul himself. When it came to Gold Trimmings, Trappings and the other tinsel Regalia that inevitably go with the upholding of Tradition and all that sort of Bunkum, Putton's stood Ace-high.

And as for Caste and Class Distinction this Store had a Prussian Autocracy shoved off the Map. There was more Camouflage, more Tartar Sauce to the square inch than some Restaurateurs use on a double portion of Filet de Sole.

To add to the mixy-mess Titles were running short. It got so bad that the Big Chief found himself in the predicament of the Railway President who has to bribe his Grandniece to think up new names for his Pullman Cars. And so, to pacify these grown-up Babes in Toyland, he had the

Super issue a Manual labeled something like, "Who's How in This Hoosgow."

Take, for example, the Adonis-like Young Man in the men's furnishings, who parted his Hair in the middle. A dapper Young Man, right enough, but from the Shoulders up he was Unimproved Property. He and Brains were not even Step-brothers. Yet, if you were good enough to dub him a Salesman, you were in for a Rude Shock.

Instead, the Superb Specimen in question would be inclined to tilt his Nasal Appendage in the Air after the fashion of a Monoplane taking a rise. He was, if you please, Fourth Assistant Furnishings Buyer. So there, Mr. Tart Aleck!

Or suppose a Plebeian Customer had the Temerity to complain about poor Delivery Service. Think you he could expect to communicate his Complaint to the Department Head himself? No, indeed, the Gentleman in Question was not approachable. The Matter, if you will, would be referred in due order to the Third Assistant in said Department who would bring to bear on the Problem all the Pressure and Perspicacity of his Nineteen Tender Years. Just like that!

And if, perchance, a Knight of the Grip invaded the Stronghold of the Clothing Buyer, the Gentleman in Waiting would be calmly informed that he could not expect to view the Grand Presence on such short notice. The *modus operandi* of Putton's required the Second Assistant Buyer to give his line the Up and Down before he could hope even to gaze at the Furrowed Countenance of H. I. M. the Clothing Buyer.

And that was the way and the why of it. Go through the whole bloomin' Cantonment and you couldn't spy a Private on a bet. Everyone was an Officer—a Person of Rank, as it were.

Now, it is all to the Merry Bombardment to have Epaulets and Service Bars and Stars, when these engender an *esprit de corps*. But in the case of Putton's they served, rather, to endanger whatever Semblance of Discipline was left.

Do you suppose for one brief moment that the Assistant Buyer in the Trunks and Leather Goods would deign to eat his Lunch at the same Beanery where the Porter was wont to imbibe his Ham-and? Why, Reginald, the idea! 'Twould be such a Blight on his Family Tree.



*The Boss gave them a piece, not to say a
healthy hunk, of his mind. He told them, to
start off with, that life is not all beer
and skittles*

One day it dawned on the Boss that while Titles were all right and all shimmery, they didn't get the Store anywhere. The Customer wanted Service—he didn't care Who-in-Heligoland the Salesman was. He was not especially interested in knowing the Sugar-coated Pedigree of the Superior Person who fawned at him over the Counter. And he was not especially concerned with the fact that the S. P.'s Ancestors had come over on the Sunflower. What he wanted was Service.

By the time the Boss got this Thought firmly imbedded in his Cabeza, even the Stenog in the outer portal could see that his Disposition was ripped up the back from Crupper to Hame. But he was Tactician enough to realize that you can't revolutionize a Business overnight.

Accordingly, he called together the be-mustached, be-manicured and be-mollycoddled Personages in his employ. And he gave them a Piece—not to say a Healthy Hunk—of his Mind. He told them, to start off with, that Life is not all Beer and Skittles. And he followed this Boweryesque Aphorism with the characteristic observation that when a Man wears a Frock Coat to

Business, chances are he has more Coat than he has Business.

Among other things, the Boss wanted to know why such Men as Ben Franklin and Abe Lincoln had not raved about their Pedigrees; and why these Master-Men were content to sign themselves "*Your obedient servant,*" et cetera.

After the first Hiccoughs of Astonishment had subsided, the Boss followed up his Ante with a Trundle full of Comments calculated to bring his Audience back to Mother Earth. He acknowledged quite frankly that it was a human frailty to like Pomp and Fuss and Fluster and all that. But there was little place for that in Modern Business.

The Establishment of Putton's, it seems, had gone in for Red Robes and Brass Railings so long that today it was hemmed in by a Chinese Wall of Red Tape and Tradition. Henceforth, he said, Snobbishness and Uppishness were to be taboo. Putton's was to be made Safe for Democracy. Hereafter the Keynote of this Institution was to be "*Pitch in and do your double-bit.*"

As a Finishing Touch to his Discourse, the Boss related a little Parable about a Milk-and-Honey

Community—a veritable Utopia that a bunch of Highbrows started to build in the Woods. Everything was hunky-dory. The Idea was all right, the Cause was worthy and the Spirit was there. But the Project fell flatter than the proverbial Hohenzollern Pancake. Why? Because everyone wanted to be the Architect, the Engineer, the Builder. Everybody was so important Nobody did any real Work. Hew Wood and Draw Water? Not for *their* Aesthetic Hands!

And so, affirmed the Chief Putter of Putton's, as he wound up with a Swinging Drive to the Green, it would be necessary for the Success of the Store that every Employee should pitch in and dig away; that they should be content to be Hewers of Wood and Drawers of Water if the Business Structure they were building was to rear its Head to the Skies.

MORAL: Titles may be all to the mustard as a relish, but why make a meal of them?

The Pot of Gold at the End of the Payroll

*WHEREIN is recorded the tale of
the young wiseacres who looked
with covetous eyes on the Long
Green only to find the
landscape a mirage*





The POT of GOLD at the END of the PAYROLL

A Fable about the prospectors who struck bottom

EVER since this wild and woolly World began to wag, Men have gone forth to wrest Treasure from Lands afar when plenty of Bullion was bubbling under their Feet—not to say in front of their Noses. And ever since Men have sailed the Seven Seas, they have thrown Belaying Pins at their loyal Deck-Hands, Slow and Sure, and have cast Longing Eyes in the direction of those infamous Circes of old, Quick and Hazardous. Thus has it ever been and thus shall it ever be. But, instead of saying Amen, Selah, I'm going to say, "Hello, we're off!" . . .

It so happened that Tom, Dick, Harry and Josephus were Deck Mates in the stately Ship of Business known as the Bon Ton Store of Spokattle. These four Young Men were the original Siamese Double-Twins. They roomed at the same Hostelry, they ate at the same Grease-Shops, they smoked the same Fags, they frequented the same Haberdasher's, they affected the same Style

of Tonsorial Art, they sang their own Songs for their own Edification and, like all Bachelors, were blissfully ignorant of the Great Divide between Heavenly Harmony and Devilish Discord.

They were a Loyal Crew—were Tom, Dick, Harry and Josephus. It was generally admitted, however, that the Last Named Individual was the Tamest Lothario in the Bunch since he had had only Two Love Affairs in his Twenty-six Years of sageful Youth, and since he was rather set in his Ways and cared naught for the sprightly little Sprees which most Young Men deem essential for a Bounteous Harvest. But, aside from this slight Difference in Brotherly Fooling, these four Sproutlings got along with as few Squabbles and as little Back-biting as can be expected in any City outside of Philadelphia.

In the four or five Years that this Amiable Quartette had been working at the Bon Ton, they had received moderate Increases in Salary and, in the regular Course of Affairs commercial and mercenary, they could reasonably expect to work into Executive Positions with an adequate Honorary when they reached this Desirable Pinnacle.

The Management of the Bon Ton did not believe in petting its Employees like Poodle Dogs; nor did it believe in trampling them under-foot. It never brought out the Punch Bowl when a New Employee arrived; and it never brought out the Vinegar Cruet when an Old One departed. It was a good, steady Store for good, steady People.

Josephus, for his part, was content to trudge along on Abe Lincoln's Advice to work and study until the Time came for his Big Salaam. But, on occasion, the other three Members of the Tribe would see pink and swear blue and would point out the Impediments that stood in their Upward Path to More Protein and More Gravy.

Tom would point to his Chief in the Credit Department, Bradley Dun by name. Brad had been perched on the High Stool so long that his Disposition had not only soured—it had weathered three Distinct Ages of Fermentation. According to Tom's version, Bradley Dun had sat on the Dough Bag so long that it was no wonder his Trousers were shiny. Mr. Dun, it seemed, had often lectured Tom on the Stern Necessity of laying by a Nest-Egg for later Eggless Days. In



They sang their own songs for their own edification and, like all bachelors, were blissfully ignorant of the Great Divide between heavenly harmony and devilish discord

fact, Mr. Dun operated on the time-tattered Theory that the only Dough you'll ever have is the Dough you've got right now. This may sound like a Parody on a Popular Song. But, to Six Ears of our Eight-eared Quartette, it sounded like a Tragedy.

Then Dick would bridge into the Game by pointing out his Chief, Mr. Clarence O'Calico, who bought White Goods for the Bon Ton. When it came to the Money Question, Clarence was tight, taut and terribly averse to doling out anything that smacked like Real Coin of the Realm. Whenever he let an Expensive Draft whiz by, you felt like heading for your Baby Grand and playing some funereal, heart-rending Selection from Chopin with the Pedal on the Fortissimo.

After which, Harry would chime in by citing his Chief, Mr. Alexander Kaplush, the Plethoric Person in charge of Furniture and Household Goods. According to Harry's Diagnosis of the Case, he couldn't hope to lounge in Alexander's Davenport until the Upholstered Person in Question had succumbed to *angina pectoris* and had taken up his Residence in the Elysian Fields.

While Josephus—who may have had more Foolscap in his Pocket than on his Head—would say Nothing and let the Triumvirate spout to its forensic Content. Every time such a Discussion took place, Tom, Dick and Harry would decide to pull up Stakes forthwith and choo-choo over to Deadwood where they had heard that the Pom Pom Store was paying Fabulous Salaries. But the next Morning they would show up at the Bon Ton as usual. So Josephus murmured something to himself about the Bark being worse than the Bite and paid scant Attention to the Intermittent Malarial Plans made by Tom, Dick and Harry for the Short Jaunt to Treasure Island.

Came a Sunday Morning, however, when Josephus found his Three Worldly Brothers drinking in an alluring Advertisement in *The Daily Bleat*. It seemed that the Pom Pom Store in Deadwood had some Very Desirable Openings for some Very Desirable Young Men but that Applicants would have to appear in person Monday morning at 8 o'clock sharp. That settled it! Why wait for Opportunity to bruise its sensitive Knuckles knocking at their Front Gate? Here

was a Golden Gondola that would take them over a Trackless Sea into the Sweet Harbor of Prosperity. Avaunt, *Allons* and Alfalfa!—they would go—and they did!

Tom, Dick and Harry jumped for the Bait and swallowed it Hook, Line and Sinker. While Josephus—who was only a Little Minnow in his own Estimation and theirs—decided he had better stick around in the little Puddle where he was and not go swimming in the Big Pond with these Big Fishes.

So, on Monday, when the Super asked Josephus as to what had happened to his Three Ford Attachments, the Stay-at-Home sparked up quite frankly and said he didn't know; they had gone on some week-end Fishing Trip without him and he certainly hoped they hadn't drowned or something.

But on the following Day, there came an Exuberant Letter from Tom who acted as Tribal Headman for the Treasure-Hunting Expedition. Tom said they had all landed Fat Jobs with Real Money and how glad they were to get out of that poky Old Place, the Bon Ton! And what Swell Queens there were in the Pom Pom—oh, Boy! No fussy

Old Maids to pester a Fellow with Hot Goose Fat and Red Flannel when he happened to have a Cold. No siree, this was the Real Class—believe him!

And wouldn't Josephus please pack up their Duds and ship them to Deadwood at once? And wouldn't Josephus be a Good Fellow and tell the Boss that—er, er, oh! well, Joey would know what to tell the Boss. It was such a Hard Thing to explain by Letter—wasn't it, now, Joey, old top?

So our Poor Dub of a Josephus performed the last Sad Rites in accordance with their Last Living Request, and was rather surprised at the way the Boss took it. Instead of growing purple in the Face and boisterous in his Language, the Boss merely nodded his Head in Infinite Understanding and smiled a Wan Little Smile for such a Big Man. The Boss seemed to remind Josephus of a Preacher he had once heard who had taken for his Text, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

In the meanwhile, Old Man Tempus kept *fugiting* right along as Old Man Tempus has a habit of doing. Josephus kept trudging right along at the Bon Ton while his more adventure-

some Brothers were trekking the Perfumed Corridors of the Pom Pom. Often of an Evening, when he would be studying up some new Kink in Merchandising, Josephus would find himself wondering as to how Tom, Dick and Harry were getting on. What Fine Pals they were and what Great Times they must be having! Weren't they right, after all? And wasn't he a Fool for staying in a Two-Cylinder Burg like Spokattle? He wondered! . . . Once Dick sent him a highly colored Card from a highly gilded Cafe with the highly original Remark that they were having a Swell Time and hoping he was having the Same. On another Occasion, Harry had sent him a Snapshot showing the Whole Crew boating on Dimple Lake, with the scrawly Suggestion that he had better forsake the Quiet Precincts of Spokattle and come to a Real Town. That was all!

That was all—until about a half year later, when Josephus received a Surreptitious Letter from Tom in which he remarked that *he* was getting along great but that Dick was certainly getting a Raw Deal. Dick had been promised a Raise that he didn't get and his Immediate Superior Officer



*At the Pom Pom there were no fussy old
maids to pester a fellow with hot goose
fat and red flannel when he happened to
have a cold*

was simply impossible. But Dick was a Regular Fellow, as Joey knew, and he was taking his Medicine without a Word of Whimper. At the same time, if Joey could possibly find a Berth for Dick in the good old Bon Ton, Tom was sure Dick would grab it.

Josephus—innocent Soul that he was—was quite nonplussed. He didn't know how to engineer such a Ticklish Deal so he thought he'd better wait a few days to dope up a Plan of Attack on the Boss. But, he didn't have to wait very long before he got a Letter from Dick saying *he* was scooting along in Fine Style but it was a Shame the way the Pom Pom was treating Harry. It seemed that Harry had been promised the Assistant Buyership of his Department but, when the Time came, the Buyer had imported his own Nephew for the Purpose. Of course, Harry hadn't mooshied a Word about it and Harry would never forgive Dick for writing Joey about it. Still and all, if Joey could get Harry's Old Job back again, it would certainly be a Great Thing for the Kid.

By this time Josephus was beginning to see the Milk in the Cocoanut. So, he was hardly surprised

in the next few days to get another stealthy Letter—this time from no less a person than Harry. This benighted Individual assured Josephus that *he* was certainly making Great Progress but that it was a Crime the way Tom was being abused. Tom had started to work for the Pom Pom at the same Salary he had been receiving at the Bon Ton; but he was promised a Husky Bonus in six months. The h.b. was not forthcoming, however, because Mr. Pom Pom had regretfully assured Tom that Business had slumped somehow or other and that undoubtedly Things would perk up pretty soon and Tom would pick up his Share of the Spoils.

Harry's Letter continued to narrate the Fact that, when Tom had suddenly contracted a bad case of Influenza and had been taken to the Hospital, no one at the Pom Pom had manifested any Deep Concern. And, furthermore, that the grim-visaged Cashier at Pom Pom's had promptly deducted Tom's Pay for the time being, on the Charitable Principle that Business is Business.

At any rate, Tom was so sick he couldn't see straight; and his Bank Account was in a State of Imminent Collapse. So, although Harry hadn't

consulted Tom on the subject, he was right certain that Tom would take his Old Job at the Bon Ton, if it could possibly be arranged.

Josephus didn't wait for any more Signals of Distress but promptly hoisted the three guileful Letters in front of the Boss. He figured that if he had to spill the Beans he might as well let the Boss count 'em. So the Boss digested the Mealy Meal and topped it off with a Hearty Laugh; while Josephus didn't know whether to be polite and join in, or be serious and act concerned.

When the Laughing Act was over, the Boss assured Josephus that, under the circumstances, it would hardly be Good Policy for him to take the Miscreants back. But this much he didn't mind telling him: that Josephus had been slated to head a New Department and that it was up to said Josephus to pick his own Help. If Josephus was foolish enough to take back his Three Erring Brothers, that was no Special Tribulation of the Boss. It was Josephus' own Wedding and he could have his own Guests. Or, to change from Mendelssohn to something less mellifluous, it was Joey's own Funeral and he could choose his own Pall-Bearers.

Joey, however, was in too hilarious a Mood to worry about Funeral Dirges so he promptly sent out a Clarion Call a la Western Union asking the far-flung Members of his Tribe to come back home for the Bon Ton Reunion. When they got the Gladsome Tidings, Tom, Dick and Harry lifted their Right Hands solemnly in a sort of T. E. Powers Attitude, and then, as if to the Accompaniment of doleful Viols and sorrowing Bagpipes, chanted that famous Refrain, "Never Again!"

And yet, if you talk to Tom, Dick and Harry, they'll tell you that Josephus is a Prince of a Fellow but an Awful Simp. Because he never goes fishing outside the City Limits and he swallows Everything you tell him—Hook, Line and Sinker.

MORAL: *The sheep jump over the fence
because the grass looks greener.*

The Boss Who Listened to Treason

WHEREIN *is recorded the tale
of a knowing chieftain who
fought fire with fire and put
out the blaze in
jig time*



The BOSS *who* LISTENED to TREASON

A Fable *about the mutiny that fell mute*

THEY may babble all they like about the Tower of Babel and they may rave all they please about the Noise-Factory in the Province of Bedlam; but for Sheer Din and Riotous Racket it would be hard to beat the Outer Offices of the Gew-Gaw Publishing Company. For, here was the Fountain Head whence flowed the Editorial Elixir dispensed to Patient Readers the nation over.

Every morning, after the Masculine Standbys of the Office had duly hung up their Society Brands, and after the Co-eds had duly donned Paper Cuffs, the Anvil Chorus would tune up with a rhapsodic little Litany about the Boss. It so happened that the Boss had been a Night Gawk all his Life and was accustomed to doing most of his Work during the Evening; so that he was in the Habit of breezing into the Office somewhere around ten o'clock each day.

No one but the Night Watchman knew when the

Boss left each night, but that didn't create much of a Continental with the Office Staff. For, whenever the Boss glided past in the morning on his way to his Private Cubby-hole, that was the Signal for the Choir to join in a brief but sybilant Psalm entitled P. S.—meaning pretty soft, pretty slick, pretty sleepy, powdered stuff.

Although the Office Crew was supposed to be under the direct Wing of Henry Pulp Wagmore, the kindly-kindled Office Manager, it would be much more proper to say that the Clerical Contingent was under the Spell of Madame Grundy. For, when it came to Batting Averages in the Gossip League, this Blabbing Bunch had the Pennant cornered six jumps from the Polo Grounds.

The Boss, for his part, was so immersed in trundling out his Daily Quota of Editorial Brick that he paid scant attention to the Verbal Trip-Hammer Exercise that went on outside. He knew that his Aides were only human and that the Human Cuss isn't happy unless he can exercise his normal Lingual Function. But he was hardly prepared for the Flank Attack that greeted his Ears one fine morning when he had been foolish

enough to work all night and fall asleep at his Manuscript-littered Desk.

He was awakened by the peculiar Cacophany of Sound that is inseparably identified with the Process of harnessing up for the Day's Work. There was the Clatter of Feet in the direction of the Cloak Room, the Stray Wisps of Good Morning Chatter, the Heavy Rumblings of a Giant Safe rudely disturbed from its Night's Slumber, the Opening of Desks, the Banging of Drawers, the Trial Sprints of Typewriter Carriages, the Swish-Swish of emphatic Dust Cloths, and the chaotic Medley of Sounds that constitute the Morning Glory Ode to the God of Business.

Had anyone suspected for the brief Flutter of a Moment that the Boss was securely if sleepily ensconced in his Sacred Cubby-hole, the Conversation would have taken on an entirely Different Tack if, indeed, it had been tacky at all. And had anyone been familiar enough with Aeronautics to realize that Lies as well as Flies can float in over the Transom, the Gew-Gaw Stock on the Gossip Exchange would have immediately dropped below par.

At any rate, the Verbal Proceedings of the Day were opened up by Miss Amy Pitman, personal Stenographer to the Boss. Miss Pitman announced, apropos of nothing, that she had seen a Man in the Movies the night before who reminded her *so* much of the Boss. He was tall and dark and distinguished-looking and he had Long Eyelashes an' everything. But before Miss Pitman could finish her Ecstatic Description, she was interrupted by Miss Bara Cuda who uncoiled some Choice Reptiles from her Websterian Wiggle without further frou-frou. By the time she got through with her Lye and Caustic, everyone knew that she had seen the same Movie but she had *not* seen the Slightest Resemblance between the Handsome Leading Man and her Bass Buffo of a Boss.

Whereupon Jack Jolson, the original Poohbah of the White Lights, muttered something like "Buckets of Mush!" and naively inquired whether anyone realized what a terrible Ear for Music the Boss had. In fact, the Boss had remarked to Jack on more than one Occasion that the Average Brand of Music tried out on the Vocal Steinways of the American Public was a Riot of Rot; and that there

was more genuine Swing and Lilt to the Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes than there was to the Sextettes from Louisiana dished up in Tin Pan Alley.

At this juncture, Mr. Horace Greeley Conklin, an Assistant Editor of the *Gew-Gaw Magazine*, chirped in with the bland Comment that the Boss' Ignorance on Literary Matters was simply appalling. The Boss had freely confessed to him that he would die just as happily if he hadn't read Rabindranath Tagore, and that he found more Solace in wading through a *Gothamy Tale* by O. Henry.

Whereat Mr. Edgar Allen Browning, in charge of the Poets' Corner, stepped into the versified Conversation with the Lament that the Boss knew absolutely nothing about what constituted Good Poetry. The Boss, it seemed, was of the Opinion that the Bubble Teaser at the Corner Drug Store could mix a Holstein Highball with more Poetic Feeling than some of these Alleged Poets could mix a simple Quatrain about the Moon, the Stars, and the Girl Who Sold Sea Shells at the Seashore.



*The bubble teaser at the corner drug store
could mix a Holstein Highball with more poetic
feeling than some of these alleged poets could
mix a simple quatrain about the Moon, the
Stars, and the Girl Who Sold Sea Shells
at the Seashore*

Following which, Mr. Addison Burke Quillby, the Sage of the Book Review Department, looked up from his Lore long enough to remark that the Boss was a very narrow-gauged and practical-minded Individual. On one Occasion, he had told Quillby that what the People wanted was the Philosophy of Plato in the Language of the Motor-man. On another Occasion he had assured the same shocked Editor that a Subject like Metaphysics was, for the average person, a Waste of Time; and that, so far as *he* was concerned, the Point of Interrogation could turn a Somersault and call it a Day.

Not to be outdone by this Avalanche of Calci-mine Comment, Mr. Windsor Camelbrush, the Assistant Art Editor, daubed into the Landscape with the China-white Remark that the Boss was an Absolute Blank when it came to appreciating Modern Art. Somehow or other, the Boss couldn't quite see this Voguish Stuff that made a Man look as if he had spent a Sleepless Night pressing his Trousers under the Family Ostermoor and then had spent a Fretful Day worrying over the Bag in his Knees, the Sag in his Abdominal Area and

the Crease in his Lumbar Region. Nor could he quite see the Big Idea in making Women look like Denizens of the Rouge Monde where the Lip Stick Orchestra dispensed its Chin Music to the Habitués of Rainbow Lane and Peacock Alley. It was clear to see that the Boss was helplessly old-fashioned in his Ideas.

At this stage of the proceedings, Mike O'Leary—the erudite Office Boy who had been tussling with Irritable Mail Bags throughout this Gab-fest—hurled himself into the Conversational Maelstrom by telling them to cut the Gaff and get down to Business and lay off of the Boss. For, the Boss was the only Regular Guy in the Place, no matter what these Gew-Gaws said about him, and he liked the Boss and the Boss liked him—and that was all there was to it! Furthermore, the Boss was a great Baseball Fan and an Office Boy could attend the Obsequies of Twenty Grandmothers in one Season, so far as this Boss went. And, if they wanted to know the Real Truth, the Boss had more Good Nature to the Clock Tick than they had to the Calendar Year—and some more Spirited Stuff pitched in the same Boyish Key.

Mike's Flow of Enthusiasm was cut short, however, by Miss Corona Remington who told him he was too young to talk to his Elders and that the Best Thing he could do right then was to come over and fix her Typewriter Ribbon. Because she had spent Two Hours in the Parlor last night with her Nail Buffer and she didn't propose to soil her Immaculate Fingers on such Sordid Things.

Whereupon Mr. Oliver Underwood, the Chief Assistant Editor of the Gew-Gaw Magazine, who had been too busy suppressing the Bulge in his Shirt Front to take an Active Part in the Conversation, steeped himself in Baboonish Brilliancy and stepped into the Breach. He assured his Audience that, regardless of what a fresh Office Boy might say, the Milk of Human Kindness dispensed by the Boss smacked strongly of the Can.

As this Astute Young Man warmed up to his Subject, he narrated a Story that would have drawn a Crowd even in the Streets of Bagdad and Damascus. The trouble was, according to this Modest Weasel, that the Boss wouldn't listen to Reason. Very few people appreciated that Oliver Underwood was the real Brain-Factory of the Out-

fit; and, to be quite frank about it, Mr. Oliver Underwood couldn't see how the Gew-Gaw Magazine could possibly get along without Mr. Oliver Underwood—and Mr. Oliver Underwood wished to assure everyone present of this Weighty Fact.

Then, as if to add Fuel to the ever-lambent Flame of Controversy, Ollie added that he knew so much about the Business that the Boss wouldn't dare fire him. And if, by some Cataclysm of Fate, this Purgatorial Event ever did happen, Ollie could get a Big Job on the Jim-Crack Magazine faster than you could flip Jack Robinson. So there!—that's where Oliver Underwood stood in the Good Graces of this Inky World.

Oliver's Career would have been cut short then and there had not the Boss—who had been drinking it all in by the Spoonful—restrained an Impulse to press the Buzzer and set the Buzzards flying over Ollie's Head. But, just as he was about to reveal to his Performers that he had witnessed their Undressed Rehearsal from the Wings, an Idea came full panoplied from the Sky and smote him Hip and Thigh. Yes, he would!—by the Great Tin Horn of Horatius—he would fight

Fire with Fire! He would prove to this Warrish Tribe of his that he was Every Inch a Ruler!

Accordingly, this Wise Man of the East let himself out of his Sanctum by the Hall Door, slipped downstairs for his Morning Potion of Java and, about fifteen minutes later, breezed into the Outer Office and glided past to his Little Layette as if nothing had happened to mar the Serenity of his Chastened Life.

No sooner had the Boss swung into the Saddle of his Swivel-Chair than he buzzed for Sir Oliver Underwood and neatly administered the Guillotine Treatment without even reaching for the Chloroform. The Boss made it clear to the Astounded Victim that he was afraid the Gew-Gaw Magazine wasn't big enough for him and that he had better seek a Wider Berth. In fact, the Boss had come to the Conclusion that Oliver had too much Brains for One Man and he ought to incorporate for his Own Best Interests.

When Oliver remonstrated that he was quite willing to stay on with the Gew-Gaw Magazine, even if it did cramp his Style, the Boss merely made a Bicycle Face and allowed the Remark to



*As he gyrated from Socrates to Samoa their
eyes grew round with wonder. In the parlance
of the poet laureate of Broadway, the boss
simply knocked 'em dead*

skid off his Front Tire. And when Oliver came down off his Perch and whined that Jobs were scarce and he didn't know where he could get one, the Boss tried to smooth the Ruffled Pillows by observing that when a Man has made his Bed there is only one Hotel to stop at.

By the time Oliver came to, he had more Bruises than the Best Man at a Polish Wedding. But the Boss couldn't stop to administer First Aid as he had a Major Operation looming up ahead. So, summoning his well-preserved Office Manager, Mr. Henry Pulp Wagmore, he asked that all the Folk in the Outer Office assemble in his Lair, with the exception of Mike, the Office Boy, who was to keep watch outside while the Seance took place.

Henry waddled outside with the Foreboding that all was *not* quiet along the Potomac and, without further ado, huddled the Galley Slaves into the Pilot's Office. The Latter Individual opened the Nautical Proceedings by observing that Mr. Oliver Underwood, his valued Assistant Editor, had just tendered his Resignation for Reasons which neither the Boss nor Mr. Underwood was privileged to disclose at the Moment.

At this Remark a Shudder went through the Assembled Congregation because they didn't quite like the Tone the Sky-Pilot took. They weren't exactly nervous—they merely shook from Cellar to Cornice. And as for Miss Bara Cuda, she felt about as dizzy as a Globe-trotting Schoolmarm perched atop the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Noting these slight Symptoms of Apprehension, and nothing loath, the Boss began doling out his Distilled Wisdom in large, allopathic Doses. It had suddenly dawned on him that he was neglecting a Serious Duty in letting his Aides struggle along without his help; and, just to show that his Cardiac Department was not misplaced, he was willing to come down every morning at eight-thirty to help his Scholars along with their Personal Education. Although this was half an hour earlier than the Ordained Hour for Opening, they could see it was for their own Benefit and not for his.

As a Tentative Curriculum, he suggested a Short Course that ran the gamut from Archimedes to Zola. He touched lightly on the importance of Sanscrit in the daily lives of people; and he urged them to nip off some Greek Roots, if they could

possibly find time. He discoursed learnedly on the great Games fellows like Euclid and Copernicus used to play—and said they would find them much more entertaining than the Childish Antics of Mugsie McGraw and Tyrus Cobb. By no means did they want to pass up the Delicacies prepared by Benvenuto Cellini and, if they grew tired of that, they might drop in at Mme. de Stael's for an evening.

In the parlance of the Poet Laureate of Broadway, the Boss simply knocked 'em dead. As he gyrated between Socrates and Samoa, their Eyes grew round with Wonder. Was this the same Boss who had told them to veer away from this High-Brow Chatter and get down to Primer Stuff? Impossible! But there he was winging along like a Flail in Full Swing!

During the Course of his Discourse, the Boss made rather Pointed Reference to the Sword of Damocles, tapering it with the Suggestion that whenever they felt in a belligerent Mood, they would find nothing more enjoyable than the Story of the French Revolution with its Guillotine Performances, matinee and evening.

Without stopping even to adjust his Rims, the Boss kept burning up the Track in a Manner that would have turned Barney Oldfield saffron with Envy. On one Lap he picked up Pythagoras, honked a Graveled Greeting to Demosthenes, waved a cheery Hello to Epictetus and doffed his Hat in friendly obeisance to Confucius, Buddha and Brahma. By the time he got back to Aristotle and Marcus Aurelius he was just picking up his Second Wind.

The Boss didn't care especially whether he was exceeding the Syllable Limit or not. So, suppressing an Inward Chuckle, he piloted his Verbal Jitney from Hobohemia to the Hang-out of Hottentots. His Gas kept bubbling all the way from Charlemagne to Attila to Jenghis Khan with occasional Stop-offs at such easy Places as Flaubert, Euripides, Keats and Shelley.

He emphasized the Importance of cultivating such Club-Comrades as Don Juan and Don Quixote and was on the point of delving into the Rhythmic Realms of Grieg and Massenet when he noticed that his Audience was gasping for Breath and going down for the Third Time in his

Sea of Words. Whereupon he weighed Anchor and told them he would expect Personal Reports of Progress at eight-thirty each morning.

And to this Day, no one knows how the Boss came to swallow Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf in one Gulp; no one knows why Oliver Underwood was suddenly goofed off the Gew-Gaw Horizon; no one realizes how spiteful an Innocent Little Thing like an Open Transom can be; and no one can figure out how Mike O'Leary, that fresh Office Boy, can afford to sprout a New Suit and a Season Ticket to the Ball Grounds when everyone knows his Widowed Mother takes in Washing to make Ends meet.

MORAL: *The quickest way to quell a riot
is to start one yourself.*

All Fuzz and a Yard Wide

*WHEREIN is recorded the tale
of a man who was a glutton
for work but whose eyes
were larger than his
stomach*



ALL FUZZ

and a YARD WIDE

A Fable about the do-it-all who did nothing

WHETHER or not we believe in the Flub-dub of the Palmist or the Whimsies of the Weather Vane, it is only seasonable to assume that Jupiter Pluv was editing the Almanac when Tobias Grimwood shot over the Rapids into this Vale of Tears. For, when the time came for the Roll-call of Birthmarks, there were found among those present a Foreboding Brow, a Rainy Sunday Complexion and a Howling Dervish of a Disposition.

Still, just to show you that there is such a thing as a Happy Ending even at the Beginning, I will throw in the Clutch long enough to remark that Tobias grew up to be a Man of Parts—of so many Parts, in fact, that his Innards resembled the Operating Department of a Swiss Verithin Watch.

Even as a Lad in School, Toby exhibited a pronounced Tendency to take all the Parts in the Play for himself. Not that he wanted to cop all the Spotlight—not that he begrudged others a Speak-

ing Part or two—but wholly and solely because he wanted to do Everything himself.

Just about the time Toby emerged into the Sapling Class, he heard a bright Sunday School Spruce remark that Success is like an Orphan Asylum in that it is made up of a Lot of Little Things. And, all through Life, he religiously adhered to that Precept.

From an anatomical Point of View, Toby was as tall as a Telephone Pole and about as corpulent as a Match. While this may have been due to the fact that his Infantile Diet had consisted largely of Lemon Juice and Lime Water, it is much more probable that he had acquired his Vinegary Temperament by a Process of Personal Inhalation.

In his Boyhood Days his Mother was wont to ask what was eating him; and in his Benedic-tine Days, alas, his Wife picked up the same unsweet Refrain and sang it every Breakfast Morn—providing her hectic Hubby took time enough to wade into the Solid Sustenance and Liquid Washdown set forth for the Delectation of his Gastric Juices.

In short, Tobias Grimwood was the Original

Irritable Cuss—in the large family size. He had gone in for the Long Face and the Perennial Frown so long that not even an Open-minded Camera would dare to shutter at the Thought. But, aside from the Fact that he had severed his Jocular Vein and had forgotten how to laugh; and aside from the innocent Avowal that he wore both Suspenders and Belt to show his Shaky Faith in Trouserkind; and aside from the Reputation he had achieved as a dyed-in-the-wool and mellowed-in-wood Pessimist, Toby wasn't such a bad sort at that.

Like many of us who blunder into a blustering Storm with our Cravenettes turned inside out, Tobias meant well. Fact is, he meant entirely too well. His idea of Maximum Efficiency was to have Everything in the Shop percolate through his Nervous Fingers. He was in the habit of lamenting that Good Help was as scarce as Hen-teeth when he had all the available h. t. in town cooped up in his own Roost.

By some queer quirk of The Powers That Be Upstairs, the fussy, finicky Bosses seem to garner the best Help. Why this is so is something the sad

Chronicler of these lines does not profess to know. The fact remains, howsomever, that Tobias Grimwood had competent *aides de camp* who could handle things from Soup to Hazel without even a Ripple of Ketchup on the Table-cloth. But with Tobias, all this went for nixie-nix nux vomica. For, how could they hope to do Things the way *he* wanted?

For instance—there was William Abel, his Right-hand Man, who could swing a Hefty Left, too, if the need arose. Even a Lamplless Lizzie could see that William was an able Fellow. But that was *just* the trouble, according to his Appreciative Employer, Mr. Grimwood.

“That Fellow is too bloomin’ competent,” Toby would moan. “Have to watch these cock-sure Fellas. Too self-reliant—think they can’t make Mistakes—uh! Get you in deep Ditch Water if you’re not keerful.”

And then there was Polly Anna Perkins who was a decidedly capable Young Matron. But Tobias didn’t especially relish this Young Lady of Affairs because she pawed over him too much—made him nervous. According to this genial Gentleman’s

Survey of the Feminine Situation, Polly had a Mean Shoulder and her Feet were too big. As this is rather indefinite, I should extend this by saying that she had Feet like Polly the Pie Girl in Jerry's One Arm Lunch.

But a Lady's Pedal Reach-outs are not necessarily indicative of her Mental Scope. Polly had a perfectly Good Head on her Shoulders (which weren't a bit mean, if you want to know the Shapely Truth) and she was perfectly willing to put that Head to use for the good of Toby. But a lass and a lack—nothing doing!

Tobias would summon his Aides of a Morning, outline the Routine of the Day and then, after Hours, would preen over their Desks to see if everything was hunky-dory. It wasn't, he told the still small Voice of Conscience, that he didn't trust them—he just wanted to make sure. Of course, his Dinner at home would get cold and his Frau would get poutish, but, if *he* didn't look out for all these Little Things—Goodnight, Montessori!—who would?

On those Rare Occasions when some one did pull a Boner, Tobias would hail the Quivering Culprit



*Tobias Grimwood went in for the long face
and the perennial frown. He had severed his
jocular vein and had forgotten how to laugh*

before him and work himself into a Violent Lather. The Perspiration would stand out on his Forehead like the Excess Moisture on a Slab of new-mown Neapolitan Ice Cream. And he would call on the High Gods to witness the Waste, the Profligacy and the Sheer Stupidity of the Present Day and Age. Only, my dear Vivian, his Language on such Occasions wasn't quite so velvetish.

Then he would jounce himself Home, all tuckered out, and about as enticing to the Eye as a Sick Cucumber in the Sun. No matter how tempting the Viands placed before him—no matter how much his Helpmeet had stewed and slaved to cajole his capricious Appetite—Tobias would sniffle in disdain. He would absorb his Soup like a Wild Bee drains a Rose, and would clean up the Dinner Sweepstakes in record time, winding up with a Quick Hurdle of the Dessert Barrier.

And if the Wife, in an Angelic Effort to chirk him up, would suggest a Show or a Show-up Visit to some gracious Non-Relatives, Tobias would get on the Stump and begin to rail all over again. What—go out this evening—the way he felt? Couldn't she see he was dying on his Feet? Couldn't

she see he was worn to a Frazzle and that he had gone through a grilling Grind from early Morn to Eventide? What was the Matter with the Present Generation of Wives, anyway? All they thought about was Clothes and Entertainment! Suffering Corntoads, what a selfish and inconsiderate World this was!

As Toby put it, it was a Tale that would bring Tears to the Eyes of a Snow Man—let alone the loving Wife of his heaving Bosom. And so, of course, the Good Wife would try and comfort and caress the Poor Tired Grizzly. She would fetch out the famous Prescription of Slippers, Pipe and Newspaper—warranted to soothe all Ruffled Bears—and resign herself to another Evening of stifling Boredom.

By the time Toby hit the Hay every night he would look about as cheerful as the Chief Mourner at an Old-fashioned Wake who announces that “All Friends may now pass to the right of the Casket—Perfesser, Hearts and Flowers.”

Toby's pet method of wooing the much-wooed Morpheus was to pillow his aching Head in a pair of palsied Hands and count Sheep. Yea, verily,

the Black Sheep of his Fold. He would wonder, for example, whether the Night Watchman was doing the Airedale Act at the Store or whether he was holding spirited Converse with the Ex-Bar-Keep who presided over the Night Hawk Lunch Room 'round the corner.

He would allay his Troubled Mind with the Pleasant Thought that on the Morrow he would throw his Paper Weight at the Office Boy for leaving the Transom and the Window open at the same time. And then, on the succeeding Night, after he had duly established a new Record in Abdominal Marksmanship, he would decide that he had better raise the Kid's Pay lest the Father of said Youngling make him pay heavily for his Target Practice.

And if, perchance, the Fire Engines went clanging down the Street like Demons of the Night, Toby would immediately jump to the Nightgown Conclusion that it was the Paint Store next door and why in blazes were Paint Shops allowed to smudge the Earth?

And that was the endless Way of it. If it were not One Thing to worry about it was Another.

Usually it was Both. Small wonder, then, that Toby awoke each Morning refreshed, exuberant and with all his Spirits hitting on high—mebbe! Small wonder that, one Day, his Solicitous Wife—with the eternal Intuition ingrained in her Tribe—saw the Ill Winds whirling around Toby's Head and decided that she had better get a Doctor and get him quick. For, this couldn't last long—nor Toby, either!

Mr. Grimwood, however, could not quite see the Necessity of all the Thumping and Thawing he received at the hands of the owlish Medico. He admitted he felt a little out of sorts but that was all. The Disciple of Hippocrates not only agreed with the Patient but assured him that unless he went away for a Good, Long Rest, said Good, Long Rest would come to Toby entirely of its own Accord and without any Effort on his part at all.

In fine, the beardless Bard made it painfully plain to Toby that he was running along on a High Tension Track with quite a few Cylinders missing and that, unless he slowed up, he would whiz past the Judge's Stand faster than he knew.

Toby listened to the Dope Sheet with all the

respectful Attention that one must accord an Expensive Specialist. But, in the same inward Breath, he was telling the Doctor to go to Grass or some other Downy Place known for its Comforts warm.

The Doctor's Verdict was, so to salve, the Fly in the Unguent. Toby found himself in the Grip of a great, gooey Gob of Gloom. A Blizzard of Bitterness raged in his Soul. After all his Work and Worry and Fret and Sweat—where was he? Was there no Balm in Gilead?

No—but there *was* at Los Golfos—whither his Wife bade him hie himself and hie fast. But Toby remonstrated that it would cost a Whale of Kale; and besides, didn't she realize that the Business would go to Rack and Ruin if he were not on the Job all the time?

Friend Wife, however, assured her Ailing Husband that while the Month's Trip might cost a Wad of Wampum it wasn't nearly as expensive as the latest Styles in Wooden Kimonos. And, as for the Business, she would keep her Proprietary Eye peeled on the Store during his Absence.

Finally, after considerable Gnashing of Teeth



*Thus propped up on the cushions of human
faith, our unhappy invalid reached Los Golfos
where he gave himself over to the delightful
pursuit of chasing pills every morning
and swallowing them every night*

and Donning of Sackcloth, Toby was convoyed to the Train—his Affectionate Spouse on one side, assuring him that she would send him a detailed Report by Wire each day—and his Attending Physician on the other side, assuring him that the Only Way he could hope to Pullman through Life was to keep a Stiff Upper all the Way.

Thus propped up on the Cushions of Human Faith, our Unhappy Invalid reached Los Golfos where he gave himself over to the Delightful Pursuit of chasing Pills every morning and swallowing them every night.

Hardly had Toby's Train wound its Serpentine Trail out of the City when his Better and Gentler Half summoned William Abel and Polly Anna Perkins—who were shelved a little while back, as you may remember—and slipped them the Big Absent Word.

William, who was an ambidextrous Person, leaped to the High Vault with both Hands, both Feet and an omnivorous Desire to show the Boss what he could do unfettered and unrestrained. While Polly freshened up like a Wilted Geranium in Water and vowed that here would be One Place

where the Mice *wouldn't* play while the Cat was away. Mrs. Toby—wise woman that she was—disregarded the unintentional Feline Thrust and told them to go to it!

But in the meanwhile, as Jimmy Swinnerton used to say, Toby grew fussy and fidgety and stiff with fear. Despite the cheerful Tenor of his Wife's Daily Communiques, he just knew that the Business was going to the Bow-wows. How could Things go right when he—Tobias Grimwood—wasn't there to steer the Ship of State?

Yes—happy thought!—he would return at once, without even troubling to tell Friend Wife about it. He only prayed that he would get back in time to salvage something from the Wreck and piece the Shreds together.

Accordingly, Toby returned to his Native Heath and, in a moment of Gum-shoe Deviltry, instructed the Cabby to whirl him past the Store so he could get a quick Look at the shambling Ruins. What a Sight it would be, groaned Toby! The Windows would be unwashed and unashamed, the Girls in the Store would be chewing Gum and reading Bobby Chambers, the Men would be lolling on Coun-

ters and swapping Stories, and the Sheriff would be hanging around the corner like Peck's Bad Boy.

At this juncture, the Cab skidded right in front of Toby's Establishment and lo and behold!—the Radiant Changes that had been wrought! The Clerks were all busy and Everything was ship-shop. Customers were streaming in with bright, expectant Faces and streaming out with healthy-looking Purchases. And far from the drab and sorry Spectacle he had envisioned, the Store was as entrancing as a Gem from Araby. It was quite the Brightest Thing in Town—it had more Verve and Sparkle than any of them. In fact, it stood out like a Pink Shirt at a Ministers' Conference!

After Toby had drunk in the Scene to the Fullness of his Galloping Heart, he stole Home quietly, let himself in by the Back Door so as not to rouse Suspicion and, ascending to his Lair upstairs, sank down into a Yawning Chair to chew the Cud of Reflection. What a Fool he had been to think that he was absolutely indispensable—that he had to watch over every Brood of Chicks that emanated from his Hatchery! What an Idiot he had been to wear himself out on a lot of Petty Details that

other Folk could do heaps better than he! Holy Hatteras!—he was so glad and mad at the same time that he didn't know whether to throw his Hat in the Air or to throw Himself out of the Window.

Toby was hovering on the Brink of a Rash Decision when his Wife bustled into the Room—ostensibly to find Something but really to take an Affectionate Peek at the Pet Picture of her Darling Hubby that hung on the Wall of his Den. To say that Mrs. Toby was shocked to find her d. h. here in the Flesh is putting it mildly. But, she recovered quite quickly and quite becomingly and gurgled that this was *some* surprise! And that she was *so* glad he had come back because they didn't know what to do without him! And that the real Reason he had come back so soon was that he was lonesome for her—wasn't it, now? And what a dear, darling Boy he was! But, incidentally, the adroit Lady forgot to tell her dear, darling Toby that she had just wired him he could stay away two months as well as one.

MORAL: *Don't try to unwind all the yarn yourself—you'll only get tangled in the end.*

THE · END







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